

and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A coating machine for selectively disbursing a coating material onto a food product passing there-
through, comprising
 - a frame defining a product conveyance path and having a product input end and a product discharge end,
 - a main conveyor means positioned within said frame having a discharge end,
 - means for forming a substantially uniform bottom layer of coating material on said main conveyor means, said bottom layer of coating material being formed on said main conveyor means before said food product is positioned on said main conveyor means such that said food product will be disposed onto said bottom layer of coating material,
 - hopper means disposed over said main conveyor means for providing a selected quantity of coating material which is disbursed onto the top and side surfaces of said food main conveyor means allowing a predetermined dwell time of said food product within said coating material;
 - at least one additional conveyor means having a discharge end, said at least one additional conveyor path having a portion thereof positioned below said main conveyor means in overlapping relationship to accept said food product from said main conveyor means, wherein excess coating material from said main conveyor means will fall through said main conveyor means onto said at least one additional conveyor means at the location of said overlap, said at least one additional conveyor means including means for forming a continuous, substantially uniform bottom layer of coating material on said at least one additional conveyor means from said excess coating material falling thereon, such that said food product traveling on said main conveyor means will be transferred from said main conveyor means onto said at least one additional conveyor means and onto said continuous bottom layer of coating material formed on said at least one additional conveyance path such that the dwell time in which said food product is continuously positioned in a bottom layer of coating material is increased before said food product is discharged from said coating machine, and wherein said excess coating material falling from said main conveyor means will be sprinkled onto top and side surfaces of said food product which have been transferred to said at least one additional conveyor means.
2. The coating machine of claim 1, wherein, said main conveyor means is a previous conveyor belt supported on an impervious pan over a portion of its length such that coating material dispensed thereon will form said bottom layer of coating material and said conveyor belt will carry said coating material along therewith as it travels in said frame, and wherein the portion of said main conveyor means which overlaps said at least one additional conveyor means is not supported on said impervious pan such that said coating material carried along with said main conveyor will fall through said main conveyor to form said continuous bottom layer of coating material on said at least one additional conveyor means.
3. The coating machine of claim 1, wherein, said food product is transferred from said main conveyor path by flipping thereof onto said at least one

- additional conveyor means such that the alternate side of said food product will be disposed within said continuous bottom layer of coating material.
4. The coating machine of claim 1, wherein, said at least one additional conveyor means is a previous conveyor belt which is supported by an impervious pan over a portion of its length such that said excess coating material falling thereon will form said continuous bottom layer and said at least one additional conveyor belt will carry said coating material along therewith.
5. The coating machine of claim 1, wherein, said at least one additional conveyor means further comprises three additional conveyor means, each of which forms an additional conveyance path having a discharge end, wherein the first said additional conveyor means has a portion thereof positioned below said conveyor means in partially overlapping relationship with said main conveyor means, the second additional conveyor means is positioned below said discharge end of said first additional conveyor means in partially overlapping relationship to said first conveyor means, and the third additional conveyor means is positioned below the discharge end of said second conveyor means in partially overlapping relationship to said second conveyor means, such that food product traveling on each of said additional conveyor means will be transferred to the conveyor means positioned below.
6. The coating machine of claim 5, wherein, each of said additional conveyor means are provided as pervious conveyor belts which are supported by an impervious pan over a portion of their lengths such that excess coating material falling thereon will form said continuous bottom layer and, each of said conveyor belts will carry said coating material along therewith over a portion of its length.
7. The coating machine of claim 5, wherein, said food product is transferred from said first additional conveyor means to said second additional conveyor means and from said second additional conveyor means to said third additional conveyor means by flipping thereof such that the alternate side of said food product will be disposed within said continuous bottom layer of coating material.
8. The coating machine of claim 5, wherein, said main conveyor means and said three additional conveyor means work in conjunction with one another to provide a combined conveyance path in which food product will be disposed in a continuous bottom layer of coating material so as to increase the dwell time in which said food product is continuously positioned in a bottom layer of coating material.
9. The coating machine of claim 5, wherein, said first and second additional conveyor means are provided as pervious conveyor belts which are supported on an impervious pan over their length except for a portion thereof adjacent said discharge ends, wherein excess coating material on each of said first and second additional conveyor means will fall through onto the additional conveyor means positioned below such that the excess coating material will be sprinkled onto the top and side surfaces of said food product which have been transferred to the additional conveyor means positioned therebelow.

* * * * *